Childless

ELDERLY RESIDENTS IN ONTARIO

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ELDERLY RESIDENTS IN ONTARIO:

THE EXPERIENCES OF THOSE WHO ARE CHILDLESS

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SUMMARY

This paper examines the distinguishing characteristics of one subgroup of the population surveyed for the USCO study: the respondents who do not have children. Gerontological literature is replete with documentation to suggest that children play a significant role in the lives of older persons. Little documentation, however, is available on the living situation of older persons without children. In this paper a profile of the childless respondents is created. To place the circumstances of these respondents into context, the childless respondents are compared to the respondents with children.

Eighteen percent of the total sample were childless. The proportion of childless respondents across areas ranged from a low of thirteen percent in Penetanguishine, Brockville and Sault Ste. Marie to a high of 25% in Toronto.

The childless respondents differed from the respondents with children along a number of demographic dimensions. The major differences between the groups were found in relation to sex, income, housing type, housing ownership and living mates. The childless respondents were more likely than the respondents with children to be women, to fall into the lowest income group, to reside in apartments, to rent their housing and to live alone.

The childless respondents differed from the respondents with children in their family contacts. The childless respondents maintained the fewest and least frequent contacts with family. Seven percent had no family contacts.

Health differences distinguished the childless respondents as well. The childless respondents were less likely than the respondents with children to report that their health interfered with day to day activities. Compared to those with children, the childless respondents reported fewer health conditions and fewer interfering health conditions.

Despite the differences found in health status of the two groups, the two groups did not exhibit major differences in their use of the health care system. No significant differences between the groups were found in either visits to family doctors or visits to specialists. Differences were found, however, in the rate of hospitalizations. The childless respondents (16%) were less likely than the respondents with children (20%) to be hospitalized. However, once hospitalized, the childless respondents remained in the hospital for a longer period of time.

The ability of the two groups to personally carry out nine activities of daily living (ADLS) was analyzed and compared. The nine ADLS included using the telephone, shopping, preparing meals, doing heavy housework, handling money, dressing, taking care of one's own appearance, getting in and

out of bed and bathing. No significant differences were found between groups in either the number of respondents who reported difficulty with or an inability to carry out the activities (disabilities) or the type of disabilities reported. Disabilities were indicated by 32% (n=475) of the respondents with children and 27% (n=109) of the respondents without children.

Although the respondents with children were not more likely than the respondents without children to report disabilities, the respondents with children were more likely to receive help with day to day activities. Fifty-one percent of the respondents with children compared to 41% of the respondents without children had assistance.

The sources of assistance used by the two groups differed in a number of ways. It is noteworthy that whereas, the respondents with children received the largest proportion (32%) of assistance from their offspring, the childless respondents received the most substantial proportion (32%) of assistance from paid help. The childless respondents were more likely than the respondents with children to rely on the help of neighbours/friends.

Information was gathered on the interest of the respondents in various housing options. The respondents were asked to project into the future and consider the type of housing arrangement that might interest them should they be unable to care for their own needs. The three housing options considered most desirable by all respondents irrespective of group were moving into a supportive housing arrangement, staying home with community services to assist and staying home with the help of family/friends. The childless respondents reported greater interest in moving in with friends than the respondents with children. The respondents with children expressed more interest than the childless respondents in staying at home with the help of family/friends.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is part of a series on the findings of the United Senior Citizens of Ontario survey [1]. The principal objective of the survey was to systematically examine the living situation of elderly persons who reside in the community and outside of institutional settings. In this survey a scientific random sample of 846 persons was interviewed from eight areas across the Province. These areas include five urban centres: Brockville, Penetanguishene, Sault Ste. Marie, Toronto and Windsor, and three rural communities: Athens, Bruce Mines and Cookstown.

The purpose of this paper is to identify the distinguishing characteristics of one subgroup of the population surveyed: the persons who do not have children. Gerontological literature is replete with documentation to suggest that children play a significant role in the lives of older adults. Little documentation however, is available on the living situation of older persons without children. The means by which these individuals manage on a day to day basis is virtually unknown. In this paper a profile of older persons without children is created. Consideration is given to their demographic characteristics, social contacts, recreation, health status, use of the health care system, receipt of assistance, providers of assistance, requests for additional assistance, housing preferences and transportation.

This profile is developed with a view to documenting the lives of the childless elderly and the special requirements these individuals have on a day to day basis. In order to place the circumstances of these respondents into context, the childless respondents are compared to the respondents with children.

This paper focuses on the particular characteristics of the childless respondents and the respondents with children. The living situation of the sample as a whole has been described in other papers within this series. The reader should refer to these papers as basic references for any further comparison of the data.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The demographic characteristics of the persons in the two groups are described in this section. Consideration is given to their community of residence, age, sex, marital status, income and housing.

Eighteen percent (n=150) of the total sample did not have children. Table 1 shows that the proportion of childless respondents varied across areas from a low of thirteen percent in Penetanguishine, Brockville and Sault Ste. Marie to a high of 24% (n=63) in Toronto.

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[1] Refer to the Appendix for a list of other papers in USCO series.

The respondents without children did not differ significantly in age from the respondents with children. Among the childless respondents, 60% (n=90) were aged 62-74, 35% (n=52) were aged 75-84 and five percent (n=8) were aged 85+. Within the group who had children, 60%, (n=413) fell between the ages of 62-74, 32% (n=224) were aged 85-84 and 9% (n=56) were aged 85+.

Sex differences were found across groups. Women comprised a larger proportion (66%, n=79) of the childless respondents than the respondents with children (56%, n=386). Refer to Table 2.

The majority (62%, n=427) of the respondents with children were currently married. Of those without children, just under one-third (32%, n=48) were married. Table 3 shows that within the childless group 38% (n=57) had never been married and 25% (n=38) were widowed. The corresponding percentages for the group with children were one percent (n=3) and 34% (n=237) respectively.

The childless respondents generally had lower monthly incomes than the respondents with children. Table 4 illustrates that the lowest income group (below $600 per month) was composed of one-third (34%, n=48) of the childless respondents compared to one-quarter (26%, n=169) of the respondents with children.[1]

The childless respondents differed from the respondents with children by both the type of housing they lived in and by whether they owned their residence. The childless respondents were more likely than the respondents with children to reside in apartments rather than houses (41%, n=58 compared to 24%, n=169 respectively) and to rent their housing rather than own it (45%, n=67 compared to 30%, n=209 respectively). Refer to Tables 5 and 6.

Although the majority of respondents in both groups resided with other individuals, 47% (n=70) of the childless respondents resided alone. This figure compares to 26% (n=183) of the respondents with children. See Table 7.

3. SOCIAL CONTACTS

Visits with family and friends by telephone and in person were the basis for assessing the respondents' social contacts. This section concentrates on the differences in contacts between the groups.

Fully 99% (n=835) of the total sample maintained contact with at least one family member. One hundred percent of those with children maintained family contacts, ninety-three precent (n=140) of those without children had contacts. Table 8 shows that contact with at least seven family members was maintained by 76% (n=528) of the group with children and 31% (n=46) of the childless group.

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[1] On July 1, 1982, when this survey was conducted, the federal and provincial governments guaranteed the following total payments through the Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement and GAINS-A programs: $529.29 for single seniors and $1,003.28 for married seniors.

Contacts with family both over the phone and in person were less frequently maintained by the group without children than the group with children. Refer to Tables 9, 10 and 11. Phone contact with family on a weekly basis was maintained by 56% (n=75) of the childless respondents in comparison to 84% (n=579) of the respondents with children. Forty-three percent (n=59) of the childless respondents received visits from family at least once per month. The corresponding figure for the respondents with children was 81% (n=566).

The frequency of contacts with friends did not vary between groups as did the frequency of contacts with family. Among the childless respondents 71% (n=105) had phone contact with friends at least once per week; fourteen percent (n=20) had less than monthly contact. A minimum of 69% (n=100) of the childless respondents were either visited by friends or went to visit friends a minimum of once per month.

4. RECREATIONAL PARTICIPATION

The participation of the respondents in recreational activities was examined with a view to determining whether the groups differed in their actual or desired participation.

The respondents were read a list of 21 recreational activities and were asked about the extent of their involvement in each activity. The activities included solitary activities such as handicrafts, group activities like club participation, activities requiring minimal output of energy like reading and activities requiring greater output like sports. The respondents' participation ranged from one to twenty activities with a mean of twelve. Twenty-eight percent (n=233) of the sample participated in a maximum of ten activities, 21% (n=178) were involved in eleven to twelve activities, 23% (n=199) participated in thirteen to fourteen activities and 28% (n=236) participated in fifteen or more activities. The group with children did not vary from the group without children in either their current involvement or their interest in increased involvement.

5. HEALTH STATUS

This section is devoted to comparing the two groups in terms of their health status. A number of health status measures are used for the comparison: a subjective rating of health, a comparison of health with five years previous, an evaluation of the extent to which health interferes with the accomplishment of day to day activities, a count of the number and type of health and interfering health conditions and a self-evaluation of mobility. All data presented is based on self-reports.

No statistically significant differences were found between groups in the respondents' subjective rating of health. Sixteen percent (n=137) of the total sample said their health was excellent; 45% (n=383) rated their health as good, thirty percent (n=25) considered their health to be fair and nine percent (n=74) stated their health was poor.

When asked to compare their health with five years previous, the responses of the childless group did not differ significantly from the responses of the group with children. Over one-half (56%, n=474) of the respondents said their health had remained the same over the five year period. Ten percent (n=354) said their health improved and 34% (n=290) said it deterioriated.

The childless respondents did differ from the respondents with children in the extent to which they felt health interfered with their day to day activities. The childless respondents were less likely to report interference. Table 12 shows that the respondents who did not consider health to be an interfering factor made up 50% (n=75) of the childless group and 36% (n=255) of the group with children.

All respondents were read a list of 31 health conditions and were asked to indicate if a physician had ever told them that they had the condition. The conditions included arthritis, heart trouble, cancer, dizziness, diabetics, etc. The childless group reported fewer health conditions than the respondents with children. Five or more health conditions were reported by 24% (n=36) of the group without children compared to 36% (n=246) of the group with children. See Table 13.

The respondents with children were more likely than the childless respondents to report interfering health conditions. Table 14 illustrates that at least one interfering condition was identified by 73% (n=504) of the respondents with children compared with 62% (n=93) of the childless respondents.

No differences between groups were found in the perceived level of mobility. The principal measure of mobility in this survey was the ability to walk around the average block. Over ninety percent of the respondents in both groups reported this ability.

6. USE OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The respondents' use of the health care system was measured with a view to determining whether the differences in health status found between the groups were reflected in differences in the use of the health care system. Visits to family doctors, specialists and hospitalizations were examined. No differences between groups were found in either the number of visits to family doctors or specialists. Differences were found, however, in relation to the rate of hospitalization.

Ninety-three percent of both groups had been seen by their family doctor during the year prior to being interviewed. Among those in the childless group, fourteen percent (n=21) had been seen by their doctor one time, twenty percent (n=29) had been seen by their doctor two to three times and 69% (n=88) had been seen by their doctor at least four times. Forty percent of both groups had been seen by specialists over the year's period. Within the childless group, forty percent (n=21) had been seen one time, 25% (n=15) had been seen two times and 35% (n=21) had been seen at least three times.

The childless respondents (16%, n=126) were less likely to be hospitalized than the respondents with children (20%, n=556). However, once hospitalized, the childless respondents remained in the hospital for a longer period of time. Table 15 shows that the respondents who spent eight or more days in the hospital numbered fourteen percent (n=20) of the childless group compared to eleven percent (n=75) of the group with children.

7. TYPE OF DISABILITIES AND RECEIPT OF ASSISTANCE

The respondents' ability to manage on a day to day basis was measured with the use of selected items of the OARS instrumental and physical activities of daily living (ADLS) scales.[1] These scales are commonly employed to assess the older persons' capability of performing ADLS. The respondents were presented with nine ADLS and they were asked to indicate if they could personally accomplish each activity without help, with some help or if they were unable to do the activity at all. The nine ADLS assessed included using the telephone, shopping, preparing meals, doing heavy housework, handling money, dressing, taking care of one's own appearance, getting in and out of bed and bathing. In situations where the respondents indicated that they required assistance with the ADL or that they were personally unable to do the activity, they were defined as having a disability.

No significant difference between groups were identified in the number of persons who reported disabilities. Thirty-two percent (n=475) of the respondents with children reported disabilities compared to 27% (n=109) of the respondents without children. An examination of the type of disabilities reported revealed no statistically significant differences between the groups. Within both groups, the largest number of disabilities reported were in relation to housework, shopping, and meal preparation.

Although the respondents with children were not more likely to report disabilities than the childless respondents, those with children were more likely to be in receipt of asssistance with day to day activities. Help with day to day activities was common to 51% (n=352) of the group with children compared to 41% (n=61) of the childless group.

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[1] Refer to Reference section for the reference to this scale.

Table 17 shows that persons who had help with two or more activities comprised one-third (n=225) of the group with children compared to 24% (n=35) of the childless group.

Table 18 illustrates that the type of activities with which assistance was received did not vary between groups in the case of nineteen of the 22 activities considered. For the remaining three activities, specifically, heavy housework, banking and paying bills, the respondents who had children were the more likely of the two groups to be in receipt of assistance. The childless group received most help with yardwork (27%, n=35), heavy housework (18%, n=27), shopping (13%, n=19) light housework (11%, n=16) and/or house repairs (10%, n=13).

8. PROVIDERS OF ASSISTANCE

Information was gathered on sources of assistance and as expected, differences were found between the groups. Table 19 shows that the respondents with children received the largest proportion (32%) of assistance from their offspring. The childless respondents, on the other hand, received the most substantial proportion (32%) of assistance from paid help. The childless respondents were more likely than the respondents with children to rely on neighbors/friends. The proportion of assistance that came from neighbours/friends was 23% (childless group) compared to seven percent (group with children). It is noteworthy that no significant differences between groups were found in the proportion of assistance provided by other family members, spouses or community agencies.

When the childless group was examined on its own, differences were found between the married respondents and the unmarried respondents in the sources of assistance used. Table 19a illustrates that the unmarried respondents received the largest proportion (36%) of assistance from paid help. The married respondents received the most significant proportion (59%) of their assistance from spouses. The unmarried group had a greater likelihood than the married group of getting from other family members (32% to 8%) neighbours/friends (28% to 11%) and paid help (36% to 22%). No one in the married group had help from community agencies. By contrast, community agencies provided the unmarried respondents with three percent of all assistance.

In addition to obtaining information on the sources of assistance with the 22 day to day activities, information was gathered on the use of specific community agencies: Visiting Nurses, Red Cross Homemakers, Home Care, Meals on Wheels and Friendly Visiting. No significant differences were found between groups in the use of these agencies. These agencies had been employed by eleven percent (n=16) of the childless respondents and ten percent (n=68) of the respondents with children. When marital status was controlled for, no significant differences in use was found between groups.

Table 20 illustrates that the groups did not differ in the use of any one agency. Within both groups the most frequently used agency was that of Visiting Nurses (8%). Home Care, Meals on Wheels, and Friendly Visiting were used by two percent or less of the respondents in both groups.

9. REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

Upon reporting their receipt of assistance with the 22 day to day activities, the respondents were asked whether they could use any or any additional (hereafter additional) assistance with the activities. No statistically significant differences were found between groups in the number of respondents who voiced requests for additional help. Requests came from 20% (n=29) of the childless respondents and 26% (n=177) of the respondents with children. As well, no differences between groups were found when marital status was controlled for.

Due to the small number of respondents who indicated additional requests, statistical tests could not be administered to determine whether the type of requests made were significantly different between groups. However, an inspection of the data reveals some interesting findings. These findings should be regarded with a great deal of caution in light of the small number of persons in most of the categories.

Table 21 shows that for twelve of the 22 activities considered, requests for additional assistance came from a slightly larger proportion of the respondents who had children. The twelve activities included light housework, heavy housework, making a cup of tea, house repairs, climbing stairs, mobility at home, using the telephone, yardwork, going out in good weather, paying bills, bathing and taking medication. For two activities, namely, mending and going out in bad weather, requests were made by a somewhat larger proportion of the childless respondents. The most frequent requests for additional assistance from both groups were for heavy housework, house repair, and yardwork.

10. INTEREST IN VARIOUS HOUSING OPTIONS

All older persons residing in their own household may face a time when caring for their own needs increases in difficulty. If this situation occurs, the older persons may consider alternative housing arrangements. The respondents were asked to project into the future and consider the type of housing arrangement that might interest them should they be faced with such a situation. The question was posed as such, "If at a future point in your life you find it extremely difficult to care for your own needs, please tell me if you would or would not be interested in the following housing arrangements..."

- moving in with family
- moving in with friends
- staying at home with community services to assist

- staying at home with family/friends to assist
- moving into a home for elderly persons or a housing project where some services are available (hereafter supportive housing arrangement).

Table 23 shows that the three housing options considered most desirable by all respondents irrespective of group were moving into a supportive housing arrangement, staying home with the assistance of community services and staying home with family/friends to assist. The most substantial differences between the groups related to the interest in moving in with friends and the interest in staying home with help from family/friends. The childless respondents (7%, n=9) were somewhat more likely than the respondents with children (2%, n=15) to indicate interest in moving in with friends. The respondents who had children, (56%, n=368), however, expressed greater interest than the childless respondents (41%, n=56) in remaining at home with the help of family/friends. Although no statistically significant differences were found between the groups, it is noteworthy that the respondents with children (19%, n=117) had more of a tendency than the childless respondents (13%, n=18) to report an interest in moving in with family should the need arise.

11. TRANSPORTATION

The respondents' use of and problems with transportation were surveyed for this study. Differences between the groups were found in transportation use.

Tables 23, 24 and 25 illustrate the principal modes of transportation used by each group for shopping, medical appointments and social occasions. A comparison of these tables reveals that the largest proportion (a minimum of 29%) of respondents in both groups drove themselves to the activities. Approximately one-quarter of the group with children were driven by family members to the three activities. This figure corresponds to roughly fifteen percent of the respondents without children. Public transportation to these activities was used by close to one-fifth of these without children. The number of respondents with children who used public transportation to these activities fell under fifteen percent.

The respondents were asked to indicate if transportation to any of these activities was a problem. The number of respondents who reported problems did not differ between the two groups. Problems were cited by six percent (n=9) of the childless respondents and ten percent (n=69) of the respondents with children.

12. CONCLUSION

This paper has profiled one group of persons interviewed for the U.S.C.O. Survey: the respondents without children. The distinguishing characteristics of this group include:

- They made up eighteen percent of the sample.
- Geographically, they were more highly concentrated in the City of Toronto, than in the remaining seven communities.
- Women comprised a larger proportion of the childless respondents than the respondents with children.
- They were one-half as likely as the respondents with children to be married; 32% were married, 38% were single and 25% were widowed.
- Their income was generally lower than the respondents with children; one-third had monthly incomes below $600.
- They were more likely than the respondents with children to reside in apartments, to rent their housing and to live alone.
- They were less likely of the two groups to report that health was an interfering factor in their day to day activities.
- They reported fewer health conditions and fewer interfering health conditions than the respondents with children.
- They were less likely to be hospitalized than the respondents with children, but, if hospitalized they remained in the hospital for a longer period of time.
- They were less likely than those with children to receive assistance with day to day activities.
- Their most frequent source of assistance was paid help.
- They were more likely than the respondents with children to rely on the help of neighbours/friends.
- They expressed interest in moving into a supportive housing arrangement, in staying home with the assistance of community services or staying home with family/friends to assist should they be unable to care for their own needs. They were somewhat more likely than the respondents with children to indicate interest in moving in with friends.

- The largest proportion drove themselves shopping, to medical appointments and to social occasions.

This description reveals that the distinguishing characteristics of the childless respondents extend beyond their familial structure to their demographic characteristics, social contacts, health status, disabilities, receipt of assistance, sources of assistance, requests for additional assistance, housing preferences, and use of transportation.

Up to this date, little gerontological research has concentrated on the childless elderly. The research that has been done has looked almost exclusively at social support patterns. One of the more prominent concepts used in delineating these patterns has been Shanas' "principle of substitution". The principle emphasizes the primacy of filial support and suggests that older persons will substitute close relationships with more distant kin in the absence of children. Cicerelli (1979), expanding upon the principle, points out that childless elderly will be more likely to consider receiving assistance from non-kin. He states that if childless persons become incapacitated and if they perceive the availability of assistance from community agencies, they will substitute these formal supports for those traditionally provided by the offspring.

Consistent with Cicerelli's suggestion that childless respondents are more likely to seek the assistance of non-kin, the respondents without children in this study received the largest proportion of assistance from paid help. Furthermore, the childless respondents had more than three times the likelihood of the respondents with children of having help from neighbours/friends. Contrary to the implications of the principle of substitution, the groups did not differ in the proportion of assistance received from community agencies or other family members. It is noteworthy that although the respondents with children had over twice the likelihood of the respondents without children of being married, no significant differences were found between groups in the overall proportion of assistance provided by spouses.

This study found that the childless respondents maintained fewer family contacts than the respondents with children. Johnson et al.'s (1981) research revealed similar findings specifically, childless elderly persons irrespective of whether they are married, have more abbrevated family structures.

One of the most interesting findings in this study pertained to requests for assistance. The childless respondents lacked the most conventional source of assistance, that of offspring. As well, only one-third of the childless respondents were married, thus, lacking another conventional source of support. Nevertheless, they seemed to be as able as the respondents with children in arranging to have their requirements for assistance met. No significant differences were found between the respondents with children and those without children with respect to requests for additional assistance.

The significant life style differences between the childless elderly persons and the elderly persons with children discussed in this study point to the importance of granting the childless elderly serious consideration in gerontological research. Johnson et al. argue that this group is of particular importance to consider in light of current demographic trends. They maintain that in the next century with the lower projected birthrate, and with the increasing life expectancy, the number of older persons who are childless will undoubtedly increase. This increase and the implications of it must be brought to the attention of persons planning for the elderly in the decades ahead.

Johnson et al. report that most research on aging and the family has assumed marriage and parenthood. As a result, information about childless older persons and the nature of their support systems is virtually lacking. As well, the fact that family structures assume forms that often deviate from the "traditional" nuclear family has frequently gone unrecognized.

It is hoped that this paper has sensitively highlighted some of the significant differences and similiarities between the childless elderly and the elderly with children. The implications of the findings presented are important. The means by which the childless elderly manage on a day to day basis can offer us critical information on the requirements and coping skills of an increasing segment of the older population.

TABLE 1: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO DID NOT HAVE CHILDREN, BY AREA

	(N)	%
Penetanguishene	(13)	13
Brockville	(6)	13
Cookstown/Athens/Bruce Mines	(23)	14
Sault Ste. Marie	(23)	13
Windsor	(31)	20
Toronto	(63)	24

TABLE 2: SEX OF RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	MEN		WOMEN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
No Children	(51)	14	(98)	20
Children	(302)	86	(386)	80
TOTAL*	(353)	100	(484)	100

Chi Square = 4.30 $P < .05$

*9 Missing Observations

TABLE 3

MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Single	(57)	38	(3)	1
Married	(48)	32	(427)	62
Widowed	(38)	25	(237)	34
Divorced/ Separated	(7)	5	(26)	3
TOTAL*	(150)	100	(693)	100

*3 Missing Observations

TABLE 4: MONTHLY INCOME OF RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

MONTHLY INCOME	GROUP: NO CHILDREN (N)	NO CHILDREN %	CHILDREN (N)	CHILDREN %
$ 000- 599	(48)	34	(169)	26
$ 600- 799	(25)	18	(91)	14
$ 800- 999	(20)	14	(128)	20
$1000+	(47)	34	(260)	40
TOTAL*	(140)	100	(648)	100

Chi Square = 7.05 P = .05

*58 Missing Observations

TABLE 5: HOUSING TYPE OF RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
House	(86)	59	(520)	76
Apartment	(58)	41	(169)	24
TOTAL*	(144)	100	(689)	100

Chi Square = 14.11 $P < .01$

*13 Missing Observations

TABLE 6: HOUSING OWNERSHIP OF RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Own Housing	(82)	55	(487)	70
Rents Housing	(67)	45	(209)	30
TOTAL*	(149)	100	(696)	100

Chi Square = 14.01 $P < .01$

*1 Missing Observation

TABLE 7: LIVING SITUATION OF RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Lives Alone	(70)	47	(183)	26
Lives With Others	(80)	53	(513)	74
TOTAL*	(150)	100	(696)	100

Chi Square = 23.47 $P < .01$

TABLE 8

TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILY CONTACTS OF RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

NUMBER OF FAMILY CONTACTS	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
None	(10)	7	(0)	0
1-6	(94)	62	(168)	24
7-12	(43)	29	(241)	35
13+	(3)	2	(287)	41
TOTAL+	(150)	100	(696)	100

TABLE 9: FREQUENCY OF PHONE CONTACTS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

FREQUENCY OF PHONE CONTACT	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
At Least Once a Week	(75)	56	(579)	84
1-3 Times Per Month	(26)	19	(79)	11
Less Than Once Per Month	(34)	25	(34)	5
TOTAL*	(135)	100	(692)	100

Chi Square = 73.22 $P < .01$

*19 Missing Observations

TABLE 10: FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO FAMILY BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO FAMILY	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
At Least Once Per Month	(58)	43	(489)	70
Less Than Once Per Month	(78)	57	(206)	30
TOTAL*	(136)	100	(695)	100

Chi Square = 37.61 $P < .01$

*15 Missing Observations

TABLE 11: FREQUENCY OF VISITS FROM FAMILY BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

FREQUENCY OF VISITS FROM FAMILY	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
At Least Once Per Month	(59)	43	(566)	81
Less Than Once Per Month	(77)	57	(130)	19
TOTAL*	(136)	100	(696)	100

Chi Square = 85.60 $P < .01$

*14 Missing Observations

TABLE 12: EXTENT TO WHICH HEALTH INTERFERES WITH DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

EXTENT OF INTERFERENCE	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Not At All	(75)	50	(255)	36
A Little	(48)	32	(293)	43
A Great Deal	(27)	18	(147)	21
TOTAL*	(150)	100	(695)	100

Chi Square = 9.35 $P < .01$

*1 Missing Observation

TABLE 13: NUMBER OF HEALTH CONDITIONS REPORTED BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

NUMBER OF HEALTH CONDITIONS REPORTED	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
None	(15)	10	(48)	7
1-2	(50)	33	(198)	28
3-4	(49)	33	(204)	29
5-6	(14)	9	(129)	19
7+	(22)	15	(117)	17
TOTAL*	(150)	100	(696)	100

Chi Square = 9.59 $P < .05$

TABLE 14: NUMBER OF INTERFERING HEALTH CONDITIONS REPORTED BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

NUMBER OF INTERFERING HEALTH CONDITIONS REPORTED	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
0	(57)	38	(192)	27
1	(26)	18	(136)	19
2-3	(38)	24	(178)	26
4-5	(17)	11	(88)	13
6+	(12)	9	(102)	15
TOTAL	(150)	100	(696)	100

Chi Square = 9.09 P = .05

TABLE 15

LENGTH OF RESPONDENTS' HOSPITALIZATION BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

LENGTH OF HOSPITALIZATION	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Not Hospitalized	(126)	84	(356)	80
1-7 Days	(5)	2	(62)	9
8+ Days	(20)	14	(75)	11
TOTAL*	(151)	100	(693)	100

Chi Square = 7.12 P < .05

*2 Missing Observations

TABLE 16: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED DISABILITIES BY TYPE OF DISABILITY AND BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN

A.D.L.	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Using The Telephone	(8)	5	(50)	8
Shopping	(15)	10	(115)	10
Preparing Meals	(11)	7	(53)	8
Doing Housework	(29)	20	(159)	23
Handling Money	(7)	5	(49)	7
Dressing	(150)	1	(13)	2
Taking Care Of One's Own Appearance	(0)	0	(14)	2
Getting In and Out of Bed	(2)	1	(11)	2
Bathing	(14)	9	(59)	9

TABLE 17: NUMBER OF DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES WITH WHICH ASSISTANCE WAS RECEIVED BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES WITH WHICH ASSISTANCE WAS RECEIVED	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
0	(89)	59	(343)	49
1	(26)	17	(127)	18
2-4	(26)	17	(141)	20
5+	(9)	7	(84)	13
TOTAL*	(150)	100	(695)	100

Chi Square = 7.16 P = .05

*1 Missing Observation

TABLE 18: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO RECEIVED ASSISTANCE WITH DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
ACTIVITIES IN THE HOME				
Light Housework	(16)	11	(83)	12
Heavy Housework	(27)	18	(187)	27
Making a Cup of Tea	(3)	2	(17)	2
Meal Preparation	(5)	3	(35)	5
Laundry	(12)	8	(73)	11
House Repairs	(13)	10	(97)	15
Climbing Stairs	(6)	4	(18)	3
Mobility At Home	(1)	1	(8)	1
Using the Telephone	(1)	1	(19)	3
Mending	(3)	2	(23)	3
ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF THE HOME				
Yard Work	(35)	27	(200)	33
Shopping	(19)	13	(114)	16
Going Out in Good Weather	(3)	2	(19)	3
Going Out in Bad Weather	(7)	5	(52)	8
Banking	(4)	3	(61)	9
Paying Bills	(3)	2	(52)	8
Financial Assistance	(0)	0	(21)	3
PERSONAL				
Getting In and Out of Bed	(0)	0	(10)	1
Bathing	(1)	1	(22)	3
Dressing	(0)	0	(9)	1
Cutting Toenails	(11)	7	(66)	10
Taking Medication	(2)	1	(15)	2

TABLE 19: PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY VARIOUS SOURCES TO RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN

ASSISTANCE PROVIDER	GROUP	
	NO CHILDREN	CHILDREN
Daughter	0%	19%
Son	0%	13%
Other Family Member	24%	21%
Spouse	16%	16%
Neighbour/Friend	23%	7%
Community Agency	2%	2%
Paid Help	32%	20%
Other	3%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%

TABLE 19a PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY VARIOUS SOURCES TO RESPONDENTS WITHOUT CHILDREN BY MARITAL STATUS

ASSISTANCE PROVIDER	GROUP	
	MARRIED	UNMARRIED
Other Family Member	8%	32%
Spouse	59%	
Neighbour/Friend	11%	28%
Community Agency		3%
Paid Help	22%	36%
Other		1%
TOTAL	100%	100%

TABLE 20: USE OF SPECIFIC COMMUNITY AGENCIES BY RESPONDENTS AND BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Visiting Nurse	(12)	8	(54)	8
Red Cross Homemaker	(7)	5	(26)	4
Home Care	(2)	1	(13)	2
Meals On Wheels	(2)	1	(9)	1
Friendly Visitor	(1)	1	(5)	1

TABLE 21: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY TYPE OF REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE AND BY WHETHER THEY HAVE CHILDREN

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
ACTIVITIES IN THE HOME				
Light Housework	(8)	5	(45)	7
Heavy Housework	(15)	10	(81)	12
Making a Cup of Tea	(0)	0	(5)	1
Meal Preparation	(4)	3	(17)	3
Laundry	(3)	2	(11)	2
House Repairs	(9)	7	(51)	8
Climbing Stairs	(0)	0	(10)	1
Mobility At Home	(0)	0	(2)	1
Using the Telephone	(0)	0	(5)	1
Mending	(4)	3	(4)	1
ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF THE HOME				
Yard Work	(9)	7	(61)	10
Shopping	(4)	3	(23)	3
Going Out in Good Weather	(0)	0	(3)	1
Going Out in Bad Weather	(4)	3	(15)	2
Banking	(2)	1	(7)	1
Paying Bills	(0)	0	(5)	1
Financial Assistance	(1)	1	(7)	1
PERSONAL				
Getting In and Out of Bed	(1)	1	(2)	1
Bathing	(0)	0	(2)	1
Dressing	(1)	1	(1)	1
Cutting Toenails	(8)	5	(32)	5
Taking Medication	(0)	0	(1)	1

TABLE 22: INTEREST EXPRESSED IN VARIOUS HOUSING OPTIONS BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Moving In with Family	(18)	13	(117)	19
Moving In with Friends	(9)	7	(15)	2
Staying at Home with Community Services to Assist	(88)	66	(381)	60
Staying at Home with Family/Friends to Assist	(56)	41	(368)	56
Moving Into a Supportive Housing Arrangement	(98)	69	(452)	69

TABLE 23

PRINCIPAL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION
USED TO GO SHOPPING
BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN
(NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Walk	(43)	30	(122)	19
Drive Self	(46)	32	(300)	45
Driven By Spouse	(13)	9	(76)	11
Driven By Relatives	(6)	4	(95)	14
Driven By Friends	(8)	6	(10)	2
Taxi	(4)	3	(12)	2
Public Transportation	(21)	15	(45)	6
Others	(2)	1	(2)	1
TOTAL*	(143)	100	(662)	100

*41 Missing Observations

TABLE 24

PRINCIPAL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION USED TO GET TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Walk	(27)	19	(79)	12
Drive Self	(42)	29	(287)	42
Driven By Spouse	(12)	9	(74)	11
Driven By Relatives	(6)	4	(107)	16
Driven By Friends	(10)	7	(10)	2
Taxi	(12)	9	(24)	4
Public Transportation	(28)	20	(83)	12
Others	(5)	3	(4)	1
TOTAL*	(142)	100	(668)	100

*28 Missing Observations

TABLE 25

PRINCIPAL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION USED TO GET TO SOCIAL OCCASIONS BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Walk	(15)	12	(71)	12
Drive Self	(44)	36	(282)	48
Driven By Spouse	(11)	9	(70)	11
Driven By Relatives	(5)	4	(75)	13
Driven By Friends	(16)	13	(36)	6
Taxi	(3)	3	(8)	1
Public Transportation	(26)	22	(49)	8
Others	(1)	1	(1)	1
TOTAL*	(121)	100	(592)	100

*133 Missing Observations

TABLE 26: USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BY WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

	GROUP			
	NO CHILDREN		CHILDREN	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
Uses Public Transportation	(92)	61	(333)	48
Does Not Use Public Transportation	(58)	39	(362)	52
TOTAL*	(150)	100	(695)	100

Chi Square = 8.36 $P < .01$

*1 Missing Observation

APPENDIX

OTHER PAPERS IN USCO SERIES

The data which was gathered in the USCO survey provides base line information on the living situation of senior citizens who are not living in institutions in the province of Ontario. The volume and comprehensiveness of the data demanded separate analysis to allow for clear and complete information regarding the association between variables. A series of papers resulted with each paper having a particular emphasis.

Within the series, seven papers are issue oriented:

1. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Their Health Status and Use of the Health Care System.
2. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Social Contacts, Providers of Assistance and Requests for Additional Assistance.
3. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Their Participation as Volunteers and Their Interest in Volunteerism.
4. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Their Use of Transportation.
5. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Their Potential and Actual Use of Community Services.
6. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Their Current Housing Situation and Their Interest in Various Housing Options.
7. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Their Participation in Leisure Activities and The Barriers to Their Participation.

Six papers provide profiles of subgroups within the population surveyed:

8. Elderly Residents in Ontario: The Experience of Those Who are Childless.
9. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Age Differences With Particular Focus on Persons Aged 85+.
10. Elderly Residents in Ontario: The Experiences of Those Who Are Frail.
11. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Differences By Marital Status With Particular Focus on Those Who Are Single.

12. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Income Group Differences.

13. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Rural-Urban Differences.

The series also includes:

14. Elderly Residents in Ontario: Study Methodology: a paper outlining the background of the study and the research methods employed.

15. Elderly Residents in Ontario: An Overview: a paper summarizing the findings and content of the other fourteen papers in the series.

The intention is that each of the fifteen papers in the series can be studied on its own but, also that the complete series will offer continuity and comprehensive information in an accessible form.

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APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

Chi Square: a test of statistical significance which is used to determine whether variables are independent or related and to also determine the extent to which the relationship is systematic and is not just occuring by chance.

Cleaning: a method by which the data is systematically examined to identify and eliminate inappropriate codes and wild punches (key punching errors).

Coding: a method of transforming information from the interview schedule into a numerical scheme for purposes of data analysis. The codes are subsequently key punched onto a computer card and fed into the computer for analysis.

Community Agency/ Service: all health, social, legal and financial services available in a community and organized under public or voluntary auspices. The services may operate with or without paid staff, and may or may not charge the user for services rendered.

Cross Tabulations: a joint frequency distribution of cases according to two or more classificatory variables. The cross tabulations allow for statistical analysis using a test of significance such as the chi-square test.

Data: the information gathered in the study. In this project it consists of information gathered from the 846 interviews.

Dependent Variable: the outcome or determined condition in a relationship between two or more variables.

Disability: the requirement for assistance or the inability to carry out activities related to day to day living (i.e., housework, meal preparation.)

Frail: reports of three or more disabilities was the basis for defining a person as frail.

Frequencies: descriptive statistics used to organize data. The information is divided into variable categories or intervals and the number of cases in each category is known as the 'frequency' for that variable. The relative frequency is calculated by computing the percentage represented by the number of cases in each variable category.

Friendly Visiting: a community service wherein the individual receives personal visits from another person. This service may be organized under public or voluntary auspices and its purpose is to provide seniors with friendly contact.

G.I.S.: Guaranteed Income Supplement - a federal government supplement given to seniors to ensure that their income is at a specified level.

GAINS-A: Ontario provincial income supplement for senior citizens.

Health Care System: family physicians, specialists, hospitalizations, nursing home or rehabilitation centres.

Home Care: a program of visiting health care services to people in their own homes who meet eligibility criteria as established by the Ontario Ministry of Health.

Independent Variables: the determining condition in a relationship of two or more variables.

Institutional Settings: nursing homes, homes for the aged, chronic care units in general hospitals or chronic care hospitals, special care facilities and mental health facilities.

Instrument: the tool used to gather data; in this case the tool was an interview schedule.

Interfering Health Conditions: health conditions identified by a physician which the respondents consider to interfere with their day to day activities.

Interview Schedule: the questionnaire used by the interviewer to ask questions and record information.

Leisure Activity: an activity which a person participates in by choice and of their own volition; includes recreational activities, hobbies, volunteer work, etc.

Mean ($\bar{X}$): the sum of all the observations divided by the number of observations.

Missing Observations: instances in which the information is not available for a particular question.

Multiple Response: a procedure done on the computer with the use of SPSS whereby a analysis can be done of questions to which the respondents might legitimately make more than one reply.

OARS ADL Scale: specific questions developed for OARS (Older American Resources and Service Program of the Duke University Centre for the Study of Aging and Human Development). The ADL Scale measures the ability of respondents to carry out the activities of daily living (ADLS), (i.e., use of the telephone and meal preparation).

Old Age Security Data Base: a complete listing of all persons aged 62+ who receive the Old Age Security Pension and the Spouse's Allowance.

Paid Help: distinguished from a community service in that it is assistance received which is not organized under public auspices as a service. It is all other assistance for which a fee is paid.

Personal Care Activities: activities such as bathing, dressing and getting in and out of bed.

Pretest: the testing of a research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule prior to actually administering it for a study. The purpose of a pretest is to see how the instrument actually works in the field. The extent to which the questions are understood and the ease with which the instrument is administered is examined.

Previously Married: individuals who were married but are not presently married due to being widowed, divorced or separated.

Random Sample: a process for sample selection in which every element in the population is given an equal chance of being picked.

Represenativeness: the degree to which the study sample represents the population at large. Specific characteristics such as sex and age can be compared to determine the representativeness.

S.D.: a statistic which measures the scatter of a set of data and indicates the extent to which the responses vary around the mean.

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences is a system of computer programs for the purpose of data analysis.

Sample: part of the population at large, selected for study.

Sample Frame: the base from which a sample is drawn, i.e., list of names.

Significant Differences: determined through a statistical procedure to establish that the relationship between variables did not occur by chance.

Single: persons who have never been married or are not living common-law.

Social Contacts: visits with friends and family or in person.

Socio-Economic: characteristics frequently used to measure social status such as educational level or income.

Stratified Sample: a sample procedure whereby all individuals are divided into groups or categories (in the case of this study it was communities) and then an independent sample is selected within each group or stratum.)

Supportive Housing Arrangements: a housing arrangement in which some supportive services are available, such as meals, house cleaning.

Tau: Kendal's Tau: a statistic used to measure the association among ordinal data. It summarizes the relationship between variables.

Variable: refers to a particular characteristic of the sample being considered.

Volunteer: a person who gives his/her time to a particular cause or organization without pay.

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